

14 Gooseberry Hill  
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Appropriations Committee  
Legislative Office Building  
Room 2700  
Hartford, CT 06106

February 2, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

After many years of successful operation, these past months have been filled with uncertainty regarding the status and continued well-being of **Organized Parents Make a Difference** (OPMAD) and the **After School Grant Program**. This important funding, finds itself on the budget block and this could negatively impact hundreds of families in Connecticut.

My son attends the Environmental Sciences Magnet School at Mary Hooker (ESM). As a family with both parents working outside the home, OPMAD has provided us with peace of mind, knowing that our son is in a warm and enriching environment before and after school. The staff are nurturing and provide lots of wonderful activities for the children including homework support, physical activity and other educational programming. This is all provided at a reasonable cost.

Understanding that these are tough economic times, I join other ESM and OPMAD parents to ask that you continue your leadership on issues related to quality education as the budget is finalized. Whether as a public elected official or defender of public education, now is not the time to back away from your promise of access to great education for all our children. This includes continuing to provide funding for programs that support working parents.

OPMAD and the Connecticut After School Network have made a fine contribution to our region and our State in supporting families ability to access quality education for our children. As a Connecticut resident, I ask that you do all in your power to ensure the continuation of this grant funding. It is imperative that we continue to value our education system and ensure that money flows where it is really needed, understanding that without the reforms and investment necessary, our communities will be sorely lacking in producing the quality workforce that is required in our state's economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Ashika Brinkley  
**14 Gooseberry Hill**  
**Wethersfield, CT 06109**